1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

spread and well known tribes of the Central Uplands extending from Kolhan in the district of Singhbhum and as far west as the Chitor Hills. Contact with them was from the earliest as shown by the name "Kolarian", still used by many in a generic sense for the languages and people of the Munda group. Dr. Griffiths' account of the Kols in a readable handy form is expected to remove much of this want. As a missionary of the Methodist Church, who spent many years in Jubbulpore, Dr. Griffiths had great opportunity of intimate acquaintance with the Kols of this part and his account, therefore, is based on deep personal knowledge. The Kols described by him, however, are greatly acculturated with Hindu ideas and beliefs and do not retain their original practices in the same form and extent as those living in the interior of Rewa. Nevertheless, Dr. Griffiths has succeeded in discovering traces of many interesting customs not hitherto described. Such for example is the practice of local or village exogamy (pp. 69-70) although clan-Kurhi (or Got from Sans Gotra) exogamy is no longer prevalent (p. 52). The author considers that totemism has lost its significance among the Kols (p. 54), but Russell and Hiralal mention (The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces, Vol. III, pp. 510-11) the names of several totemistic septs among the Mandla Kols, *e.g.*, the Barganiyan Kols, the Kathotia, the Katharia, and the Kumhra, who show special reverence to the Banyan tree, the Tiger, the Mattress and the Gourd respectively. Other apparently totemistic septs are the Mudia or Mudrundia, the Bhuwar, Nathunia and the Karpatia. Some of them such as Kathautia and Kathariya, Kurha, Bhumiya, Mudia (Murha) find place in the list of 22 clans given by the author (pp. 32-33). The possibility of a totemistic basis of their social organization is strongly suspected, but may perhaps be investigated with greater chances of success among the wilder Kols of Kaimur Hills, and those living in the interior of the Rewa State. Another interesting feature noted by the author is the use of bangles, specially made from metals like copper and iron, as effective protection against evil spirits, and of beads as defensive ornaments against the evil eye in children (p. 180).

The book is illustrated with drawings and well chosen photographs taken by the author, but there are unfortunately several printing errors and certain inconsistencies in the writing of the names of works cited, *e.g.*, W. Crooke's work is cited as "The Tribes and Castes of the North Western Provinces and Oudh" on p. 4, but on p. 33, the same work is written as—"Tribes and Castes of *North-West* Provinces and Oudh." Similarly Dr. Verrier Elwin's "The Baiga" is written incorrectly as *The Baigas*.

These small blemishes, however, do not detract from the real

li Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

114 564 [614] same as Borowar on our list; Bin and Binj are probably the same; and Harwariya may have become Darhvariya; the ploughman becoming the fortress-dweller.

Russell and Hiralal[1] state that they found the subcastes noted below, but their results appear to be based on materials gathered from the eastern edge of the Central Provinces. It will be noted that there are points of agreement and disagreement between their list and ours: [614] Rautia, Rautele, Thakuriya, Kagwaria, Desaha, Bharia, Savar and Khairwar. They also include as "totemistic septs" the following: Bargaiyan, Kathotia, Katharia, Kumhra and Bhuwar.

564 1. *Rautiya.* This designation is believed to be derived from the word Rawat meaning "a prince," and as such may be traced to some ancient landholding or warrior group among the Kols in centuries past. This group [554] claims to be the highest of the Kol *kurkis* and such assertions were usually not disputed by either Thakuriyas or others in joint group discussions; although on one or two occasions it was controverted as recorded under the Thakuriya (*vide p.* 41). Almost [177] without exception the Rautiyas make use of the Brahmin priest at the [585] time of wedding, and of the Hindu *nai* or barber, and the *dhobi* or [302] washerman in certain ceremonies connected with birth and death. Not to do this would be to sin against social conventions; yet in one or two cases we were told that if a Rautiya is too poor to employ a Brahmin he might make other arrangements. This probably means that far back in their history they attended to such matters themselves, but have now become Hinduized and feel unable to act for themselves. Rautiyas made the claim that they move freely among Hindus and are recognized by them in a manner that other Kol *kurkis* are not. While the group is theoretically endogamous, hypergamy is occasionally practised with the Thakuriyas. This is probably a relic from the time when intermarriage was common, but the process of Hinduization has [582] now stabilized the *kurkis*. They admit that if necessary Thakuriya girls may be married to Rautiya boys, but deny that they ever give their girls in marriages to Thakuriyas. If a *swasaha* Rautiya—those [184] whom perform marriage without the help of a Brahmin—has an eligible [585] son they would give their daughter to him in marriage only if it is agreed that the Brahmin priest and the *nai*, will officiate in the regular way.

Rautiyas have a very definite taboo in the case of the horse. [825] Horse manure is absolutely forbidden to be touched. There are several [773] curious stories that came to our attention. One of them is that in the [784] dim ages past Bhagawan gave the Kols the gift of a horse. In a few

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III, Article Kol.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

564 Kathautiyas also throw out their earthenware vessels, but not the
82 wooden ones which are considered to be unaffected by these occur-
768 rences. This may be due to Hindu influences.
415

It was intimated that hypergamy is occasionally practised with
582 the Thakuriyas but in such cases it appears that the girls are "kept"
554 rather than "married". One group of Kathautiyas asserted their superiority over the Thakuriyas and claimed that if a Thakuriya girl came to live with a Kathautiya boy, the Thakuriyas could take her back; but that they would never take back one of their girls who went to live with the Thakuriyas.

Some Kols stated that Binj, Kathariya and Kulmangans are types of Rautiya Kols, but the best evidence appears to be otherwise and these groups are treated separately below.

101 The use of the word "Rautiya" is not confined to the Kols.
171 There is a Munda tribe in Chota Nagpur called Rautiyas and a few
564 members of this tribe are found in the Jashpur State of the Central Provinces. It is also the name of a subcaste of Dahait, a mixed caste of village watchmen of the Jubbulpore and Mandla districts, and several of their subcaste names bear a close resemblance to those of the Kols. It is also a sub-caste of the Kawars and of a section of the Chamars and Rawats (Ahir).[1] The other subgroups of Rautiyas as noted above were not in use elsewhere except that among the Darzis, or tailors there is a Kathautiya subdivision.[2]

564 2. *Thakuriyas.* Russell and Hiralal[3] are of the opinion
773 that this word is derived from *thakur* meaning "a lord", and they trace this *kurhi* to the intermarriage of Rajput males with Kol females. Such intermarriage probably followed the gradual penetration of the Rajputs into the regions occupied by the Kols. The stories given below concerning the origin of the Thakuriyas probably reflect a long period in which there was a considerable mixture of blood.

According to one story a certain Rautiya Kol had two wives who often quarrelled and the husband saw fit to scold the elder of the two. As a result she left the protection of the Kol and in anger went to the house of the *malguzar* of the village who happened to be a Thakur. She began to live on the veranda of his house, and earned her food with her own hands in any way she could. After some months she gave birth to a son and the Thakur sent word to this effect to her husband, with the request that he should come and take the mother and child

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, p. 402.
2 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 378.
3 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 309.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

The Khangars of Central India have a tradition akin to the one related of the Thakuriyas, of a slaughter by a Bundela Rajput after they were made drunk.[1] This may be an altogether different story but probably belongs to the same period when the Rajputs came into Bundelkhand. No first-hand accounts were obtained by us which would shed any light on the origin of this *kurhi*.

5. *Garhvariya*. While this name occurs eight times in the list of Kol subdivisions nevertheless we found only one living specimen in spite of the fact that there were said to be many of this group around Jubbulpore. This particular Garhvariya came to us in a group of Thakuriyas and Rautiyas and was the butt of their jokes. He was short and dark and had a very flat nose, much broader than is usual with Kols. The other *kurhis* said to his face that they would have nothing to do with him socially. When asked about himself he said that he was a Rautiya who had the misfortune to be born out of Rewa State and hence was called a Garhvariya. The other Kols present would not agree that this was the real situation. Garhvariyas are considered unclean and no other sept will take their girls or give them their own daughters in marriage. They are mainly employed as field labourers. It is not unlikely that we met others, but they would not admit that they were Garhvariyas.

6. *Mawasi*. Very little was to be ascertained from the Kols about this group. They seem to be a very "low" *kurhi*, and do not even call in a Chamarin to act as midwife and cut the cord of the newly born infant, doing such work with their own hands. They are so low that no social intercourse is possible with Kols like Rautiyas and Thakuriyas. They are considered the most despised of all the Kols and "live just like Basors who are outcastes and make baskets and keep pigs."

The Munda tribe known as the Korkus and found in the Satpura hills of south central India are sometimes called Mowasis.[2] Regarding Korkus Russell and Hiralal state that the sept names of the Korkus are in many cases identical with those of the Kols and Korwas, which may mean that they are an offshoot of "the great Kol or Munda" tribe. The word "Mowasi" has reference to the largest of their subdivisions but its derivation is uncertain. The Census Report for the Central India Agency says : "The Mawasis were reputed to be a fighting section of the Kols."[3]

7. *Kathariya*. This *kurhi* takes its name from *kathri*, a mattress

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. iii, p. 439.
2 *Ibid.* Vol. iii, p. 580.
3 *Census of India*, 1931, xx: 1, p. 237.

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Chapter V.

THE MARRIAGE CYCLE

Marriage is a necessity to Kols and the ceremonies that accompany it are the most complicated of all their social rites. It is of the utmost importance that Kols be married and the bachelor or spinster life is altogether foreign to the Kol way of thinking. 581 589

Endogamy with Hypergamy. During the discussion of the Kol *kurkis* the principle of endogamy was established. It was shown, however, that along with endogamy hypergamy is occasionally practised, possibly due to Hindu and Rajput influences. Several instances of this were observed and one case may be mentioned in which there were two sons in a Rautiya family; one had married a Rautiya wife and the other a Thakuriya. Their respective children considered themselves full and equal Rautiyas. But Rautiyas never give their daughters to Thakuriyas. Hypergamy is probably a relic of the time when there was a good deal of mixing between men of higher castes and women of lower castes. In the case of the Kols this study indicates that hypergamy is practised only in connection with the *kurki* that is considered immediately below it in the social ladder. This social ladder, however, is not absolutely fixed, though about Jubbulpore Rautiyas are generally considered the highest *kurki*; yet it was sometimes stated that the Binj *kurki* practise hypergamy with the Rautiyas and would take their daughters, but not give theirs to them. Russell and Hiralal, in discussing hypergamy in the Central Provinces say: "This custom prevails largely among the higher castes of the Panjab, as the Rajput and Khatris, and among the Brahmins of Bengal."[1] The stories in connection with the origin of the Thakuriyas may imply a form of hypergamy, except that the offspring do not rise to the level of the father. 564 582

Traces of Exogamy. While the principle of endogamy is strictly enforced and the thought of any other union is repugnant, there are nevertheless certain traces of an exogamous tendency which is not a *kurki* or *got* exogamy but rather village exogamy. It is not the rule for a Kol to arrange a marriage with someone in his own village. This is occasionally done, but as the last resort, after failing to find a mate in another village. Roy notes the same tendency toward village exogamy among the Kharias. He remarks: "The probable reason 582

1 Russell and Hiralal, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 88.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

582 for this village exogamy is that originally members of one and the same clan (*gotra* or *gotar*) lived together, as the traditions of the Dudh and Dhelki sections definitely testify, and as is still the case in many Hill Kharia settlements."[1] The Kols themselves offer other explanations for this type of exogamy, but the idea of the oneness of the village lies at the back of certain of their reasons. Some said that the children of a village living, as they do, like brothers and sisters makes any thought of such unions repugnant. A similar reason was implied in the response that the boys and girls know each other too well and such a condition would not be conducive to the future marriage relationships. [606 593] It was also asserted that the presence of parents-in-law was not desirable in the same village, for if the bride was ever beaten by her husband (and it was thought that this was inevitable) her parents might be very angry and a serious quarrel with much trouble between the families was sure to result. Therefore it was considered best to get a girl from another village, and the further the village, the better the chances of avoiding such parent-in-law conflicts. Near Katni they claimed that [167] they often got their girls from the Jubbulpore section, and that they sometimes had gone as far as Assam, where Kols have gone to work in the tea gardens.

582 776 171 614 As remarked earlier, no trace of a clan exogamy could be found among the Kols of to-day, nor an exogamy based on god-septs as among the Gonds,[2] where marriage is not possible between clans with the same number of gods. A family having three gods may marry into another with the same gods or into another with other and a different number of gods.

582 MARRIAGE LIMITATIONS. There is, however, a clear line limiting the choice of either the bride or the bridegroom. It is based on kinship, for as long as relationship is remembered no marriage should take place. No trace was found of the cross-cousin marriage nor of the ancient Munda custom of marrying a grandfather to a granddaughter.[3] No [235] distinctions are made between cousins. The Kols also possess that which Lowie calls the "incest horror."[4] Children of siblings are brothers and sisters and between them marriage is considered impossible. 587 582 The levirate, in which the younger brother may be expected to take the wife of a deceased elder brother, is acknowledged. There is, however, no necessity for his doing this, and public opinion does not enforce it; yet in a real sense he is responsible for her welfare and

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 224.
2 Grigson, W. V., *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, pp. 194, 195, 200.
3 Ghurye, G. S., *Caste and Race in India*, p. 117.
4 Lowie, R. H., *Primitive Society*, pp. 13, 14.

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occasionally she is taken as his wife if he is unmarried or is able to support another wife. No trace of the sororate was found among the Kols. 582 [587]

BARS TO MARRIAGE. Before marriage is possible there are a few other matters that must be carefully checked. That the younger child must never be married before the elder, is a custom quite commonly observed all over India; the proper and the correct thing is to marry the children in the order of their ages. There is another interesting limitation; the eldest boy of a family (*Jetha*) must never marry the eldest girl (*Jetha* or *Jethi*) in the month of *Jetha* (May-June). If this be done it is bound to result in a very unhappy and quarrelsome match.

Physical or mental defects are also bars to marriage, or at least to satisfactory marriages. A person who is half-witted or deformed has very little chance of making a favourable marriage. Often such children do not survive, not through any deliberate action on the part of the parents, but being so helpless, or unable to take care of themselves as the children of the poor must do, they are simply not able to survive. Blind girls generally remain unmarried, but a blind boy who knows some kind of hand work which he may use to help support his wife may be married. If deformed children survive and do not get married they remain at home where their parents support them. 582 732

If a Kol bachelor should "keep" a woman he is not allowed to contract a real marriage until such time as this woman is renounced; the *panch* sees to this. It is not unknown that a bachelor may keep a young widow, give her up for marriage with another girl, and then after those formalities are over and forgotten, bring her back into his house as a kept woman. He will have to pay a fine or give a feast as the *panch* decides, but he is not forced to drive her out. 582 [836] [837 684 692]

Sometimes a man feels that he cannot stand the expense and obligations that go with a *pakka* or real marriage. He desires to marry, say, a certain girl, or his parents want him to do so, and there can be found no valid objection to such a match, nor is there any element in it which would force an elopement. In such a case the matter is put up to the *panchayat* and if it is ascertained that the woman in question has not been married before and that there are no other valid bars to the marriage the permission may be given. Instead of the wedding formalities the only expense involved is that of feeding the proper persons—the *panch*, the relatives, or perhaps the whole community. This decision usually rests with the *panch* itself. The formal ceremonies consist in the putting of ten black bangles on the arms of the 584 585

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

585 woman, the smearing of a little *sendur* on her forehead, and the distribution of something to eat.

582 [178 184] **The Age for Marriage.** Because of the influence of Hinduism adult marriage among the Kols is not so much the rule as it is amongst certain more isolated Munda groups. The Kols generally recommend a fairly young age as the best for marriage. They told us that a boy should be married when between the ages of seven and ten and a girl when six or eight. Of course the young folks do not live together as [585] man and wife at these ages; the actual consummation of the marriage occurs at the *gauna* time when the boy is twelve to fifteen and the girl ten to twelve. The practice of early marriage is deeply ingrained in the social thought of India in general for it has been the tradition and India is tenacious in its observances of this tradition handed down from ancient times. The usual reason advanced is that it protects both parties from promiscuous sexual relations. From their own reports the Kols give the impression that early marriages are very common among them, yet an examination of Census Reports does not seem to indicate that Kols are particularly addicted to early marriages. The 171 report for 1931[1] lists eighty castes, tribes and races in the order 582 of the incidence of child marriage. The Kols stand sixty-third on the list with only 3.4% of their married females being under thirteen years of age. At the head of the list are found the Golars, a nomadic shepherd group with 21.9% of their married females being under thirteen. They are a relatively small group. But the Telis, a "clean" Hindu caste of oil makers which has a large number of members in the Central Provinces, report 13.8%. The Brahmins in the same Province have 3.5% and thus the Kols come just below them. From this evidence it would appear that the Kols are not extreme in their practice of early marriage. However, the definition of marriage may be different and may refer to the time of actual consummation and the living together of the couple as man and wife.

583 **Kinds of Marriage.** For the Kols there is but one approved and genuine form though, as we have noted, there are cases where people are living together and recognized as man and wife without the performance of a marriage ceremony in the accepted sense. Among the Birhors Roy reports ten different kinds of marriages which are recognized as valid.[2] Among the Dudh and Dhelki Kharias he lists five types of recognized marriages: (1) Regular, (2) Elopement,

1 *Census of India*, 1931, xiii, p. 180.
2 Roy, S. C., *The Birhors*, pp. 144 ff.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

585 follow the *sadi*, but more often a period of several years separates the two. The girl should be between ten and twelve and the boy between [582] twelve and fifteen before the *gauna* ceremony can be performed. The exact time depends upon the *pandit* and upon auspicious days and seasons.

When the time for the *gauna* has come a large party carrying the bridegroom in a *palki* leaves the boy's home much in the same manner as they departed for the *sadi*. The boy's party is once more welcomed but the ceremony is not quite so elaborate as it was before. On the second night the Brahmin may be called in, though not always, and the remaining two circumambulations (*bhanwars*) of the fire are made. This time, however, there is no *marhwa* nor *magrohan*. The place where the final ceremony is performed is simply plastered and [237] in the centre of the spot is set up a low mound made of cow dung; beside it is placed a *kachha kalsa* (an earthen pot not yet fired), on top of which is a brass plate containing (1) a *dip* burning with *ghi*, (2) *sendur* paste, and (3) a whole cocoanut. The couple are tied together as before and go round the fire twice, thus completing the seven rounds [574] in all. This makes the marriage *pakka* and the final ceremony is [533] followed by feasting, singing and dancing which last the rest of the [535] night.

Sometime during the next day the couple depart for the boy's home. They are tied together and seat themselves in the same *palki* which the bearers carry a few yards and then set down while the knot is untied and the bridegroom gets out leaving the *palki* for the bride. He either gets into another one or joins the party on foot. Just before this party, which now consists of the group that went with him, reinforced by men from the girl's home, arrives at the boy's house the *palki* is set down, the boy again gets into it, and the knot is once more tied. *Haldi* water is sprinkled over them and pice are waved over the bearers who are again presented with the coins. Upon arriving at the house the couple find a new cloth five yards long and a yard wide spread on the ground leading from the path to the door of the groom's house and at one end of this the *palki* is put down. As the bride is about to get out she is presented with a tray of balls made of water and whole wheat flour. At each step she must deposit one on the cloth at her feet. Her husband follows, for he is still tied to her and as he comes he must pick up the balls and put them into a small *thali* (tray). Inside the house the knot is untied for the last time. [262] From the *palki* the women bring a seer or two of uncooked rice along with a few other supplies including pulse, which the bride had brought with her in order that she might prepare a dish known as *khichri*, a

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Chapter XII

LIFE STORIES OF LIVING KOLS

Sudhulal: A Kol who Stayed in his Village

I was born in the village of Kharara Ghat and was the youngest of five brothers. There were also three sisters in my family, which was a large one, as there are about fifty living relatives on my father's side alone. When I was about sixteen years of age my parents decided that I should be married and they found a girl for me in the village of Barela. My wife and I have lived happily together, and we have had two sons. My father died two years ago (in 1935). I have never had to leave Kharara Ghat in order to earn money. I have always seemed to be able to find things to do about the village and have earned enough to be well supplied with the things I need. One thing I do is to go into the forest and cut wood which I carry on my head to Jubbulpore. It is hard work, but it has to be done. My wife and sons also help out by gathering *tendu* leaves for the *biri* manufacturers. All of my five brothers live here in Barela. Together we control about fifteen acres of land which is rented from a *malguzar*. It is not all in one place, but in three or four places. We all do our share of work on this, and the income from the wheat and pulse is shared evenly by us. But all the money I make from selling wood, or grass, or *tendu* leaves I keep myself and we do not share it.

I have become one of the *panchayat* of this village and take a keen interest in the welfare of this village and our community. I would like you to put a school in our village. The nearest school is four miles away—too far for our small children to go even if we were sure they would be treated right if they were admitted. I can read a little and sign my name. I never went to school, but learned this from a man in Jubbulpore, who used to teach me after I had sold my wood. I even have bought some books.

I have no debts and do not drink any strong liquors. I have never been seriously ill, nor had any serious trouble in the family, nor have we suffered from the want of food and clothing. I have never had an accident either even though I have gone on hunting expeditions in charge of beaters. Very often some Europeans from Jubbulpore come out to our village which is close to good hunting places and I go with them and show them where they may find game.

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used for children and in getting good food. I know nothing more than this.

Thus a Kol preaches to us a temperance sermon!

DHOLI: A LITERATE KOL AND MAGICAL PRACTICES[1]

We are two brothers and two sisters and our parents are still living and we live together happily. I am the younger son in the family. My elder brother lives separately. I was married when I was fourteen years old; now I am about twentyfour (1937). I started my school work when I was eight or nine. I did not have any trouble for two or three years when I was in school. My parents were very kind to me. I passed the first and second Hindi classes easily and happily. When I came into the third I could hardly study for three or four months, for I was bitten on the thigh by a dog. At once people began to give my parents advice as to what they should do and it was decided that a superstitious ceremony called *jharwana* should be performed. I was led around and forced to look into seven different wells and had *supas* waved over me. During this period some things like small bits of hair were found in the flour put out in a ring about the floor and this, it was said, showed that the dog was not a mad dog. After this was known my parents bought some medicines from a potter, Manawa Kumhar. After taking it I found blood in my urine and this lasted for eight days and I felt very ill. Then my parents gave me some curds and rice with sugar which seemed to make things even worse. My parents being ignorant and always listening to the advice of other people did not pay any attention to this new trouble but kept treating me for dog bite, saying that all my troubles were due to that. I was quite young and had no knowledge of these things and how I should take care of my health. I thought that I had lots of heat in my body and that is why I was suffering from these discharges of blood and hence I used to eat only those things supposed to cool my system. In spite of all this I did not stop my education and the reason for continuing was that I knew very well that I had become very weak physically and could never do hard coolie work, and therefore felt that I should study hard and pass my primary certificate exams, and then teach in some village school where I should get eight to ten rupees a month, which would be sufficient for my maintenance. That is why I kept paying but little attention to my health and kept on taking medicines and trying to work hard at school. The result was just the opposite because due to my bad health I failed in my

1 See plate XXVI.